



THOMAS J. VILSACK, GOVERNOR
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

STATE OF IOWA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JUDY A. JEFFREY, DIRECTOR

Contact: Kathi Slaughter
Iowa Dept. of Education
515/281-5651
kathi.slaughter@iowa.gov

Embargoed Until 12:01 a.m., August 16, 2005

IOWA ACT SCORES REMAIN HIGH

High Schools encouraged to increase graduation expectations

(DES MOINES, IA) – August 15, 2006 – Iowa 2006 graduating seniors from public and private schools continued their strong showing on the ACT, with an average composite score of 22.1, above the national average of 21.1. Two states, Minnesota and Wisconsin, scored higher, with an average composite score of 22.3 and 22.2 respectively. The percentage of Iowa graduates tested decreased slightly to 65 percent from 66 percent last year, and the national percentage remained at 40 percent.

"We are pleased that Iowa students continue to score well and rank very high in the nation," said Judy Jeffrey, director of the Iowa Department of Education. "Greater percentages of our students also are reaching the college-readiness benchmarks set by ACT, and we expect those numbers to continue to grow as schools increase their focus on high school improvements."

The college-readiness benchmark scores defined by ACT are 18 for English, 22 for Math, 21 for Reading, and 24 for Science. Jeffrey said districts should analyze their ACT results in combination with other state and local assessments, such as the Iowa Tests of Educational Development, to determine strengths and weaknesses in their high school curriculum and programs.

"Most districts already have increased their graduation requirements to include at least four years of English, three years of math, three years of science, and three years of social science," she said. "We have provided a model core curriculum to districts to help them ensure those courses are challenging and meaningful to students."

Minority test-takers

Of the 22,233 Iowa students in the class of 2006 who took the ACT, 87 percent were White, in line with statewide student enrollment, which is 87 percent White. Iowa minority students continue to score above their national counterparts, but lower than Iowa White students, evidence that eliminating the achievement gap must remain a high priority, said Jeffrey, with a focus on course-taking patterns.

Females comprised 53 percent of Iowa test-takers, while 45 percent were male (two percent didn't indicate a gender). Females scored a lower composite score, 22.1, compared to 22.3 for males.

NOTE: Comparisons of ACT composite scores between states are valid only for the 25 states where the ACT is the predominant test, defined as those states where at least 50% of graduates take the ACT exam. States with fewer than 50% taking the ACT exam may have a sample of students not representative of that state's overall student population.

– More –

2006 ACT SCORES HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ Average composites:
 - Iowa: 22.1 (up from 22.0 last year)
 - Nation: 21.1 (up from 20.9 last year)
- ♦ Iowa ranking: 3rd, behind Minnesota (22.3) and Wisconsin (22.2)
- ♦ Participation:
 - Nationwide – 40% of graduates tested (same as last year)
 - Iowa – 65% of graduates tested (66% last year)

	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	State	National	State	National	State	National	State	National	State	National
All Students (percent participation)	22.0 (66%)	20.8	22.0 (66%)	20.8	22.0 (67%)	20.9	22.0 (66%)	20.9	22.1 (65%)	21.1
African American (percent of test takers)	17.9 (1%)	16.8	17.5 (1%)	16.9	18.5 (2%)	17.1	17.9 (2%)	17.0	18.3 (2%)	17.1
American Indian (percent of test takers)	20.5 (0%)	18.6	19.6 (0%)	18.7	19.1 (0%)	18.8	19.9 (0%)	18.7	20.5 (0%)	18.8
White (percent of test takers)	22.0 (90%)	21.7	22.1 (90%)	21.7	22.1 (90%)	21.8	22.2 (89%)	21.9	22.3 (87%)	22.0
Hispanic (percent of test takers)	19.7 (1%)	18.4	19.8 (1%)	18.5	19.4 (2%)	18.5	20.0 (2%)	18.6	19.8 (2%)	18.6
Asian (percent of test takers)	22.0 (2%)	21.6	21.7 (2%)	21.8	22.1 (2%)	21.9	21.9 (2%)	22.1	22.2 (2%)	22.3
Other/No Response (percent of test takers)	22.4 (5%)	20.3	22.1 (5%)	20.6	22.2 (5%)	20.9	22.1 (5%)	20.9	22.0 (7%)	21.1